

T. R. D. Webb.

70

8. Clayton Place,
Hemington Road
London June 23

My dear Friend,

I have just laid down
yours of the 22nd. I have but
little time to reply, as I am
preparing to start for Andover,
where I have a meeting this
evening.

The appearance of the bonway
Mass. Correspondence in the
Times, startled, perplexed

and grieved me. Mr. C. was
out of town, so I at once
wrote to Manchester, where, thro'
me, a meeting had been called
for him in the Free Trade Hall.
I recommended that immediately
on Mr. Conway's arrival, an ex-
planation of the matter should
be demanded. I will give you,
in the words of Mr. Barker, a
leading member of the Manches-
ter Union of Emancipation Socy,
the result of a conversation with
Mr. Conway.

"Several of us met Mr. Conway
on his arrival, I had a very
pleasant & pleasant conversation
with him respecting the Corres.

pendence. He at once admitted
 that in form, and as addressing
 Masson, he had erred in judgment;
 but that he was not out of order
in substance, & in his intention to
 serve the cause of the Federal party.
 He stated that the extreme abo-
 litionists do now desire union,
 and value it highly; but, if eman-
 cipation could be secured, they w^d
 not feel called upon to support
 longer a devastating war for mere
 Union as to territory, - believing that
 Union of sentiment, & identity of
 interests would - Slavery being abo-
 lished - bring back the divergent
 States. He said that the correspon-
 dence w^d not be severely criti-
 cized

by ~~the~~ his friends in the Northern States, as they w^d see his drift, & understand his intent, wh^{ch} was to make Mason say that the South had no policy of emancipation in view, even for the sake, or in the contingency, of Recognition or Independence."

"He knew that he was submitting a proposition that Mason could not & would not entertain, & that, therefore, he was doing no practical harm to the North or the Union cause by submitting it."

"He was advised to the particular step by several influential persons in this country, whose names he has given us in confidence."

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"Perhaps, upon the whole, he can
scarcely with justice be severely
blamed for the blunder he has com-
mitted. He confesses he is no
great politician, & says that he is
much more for Emancipation than
Union; but that he is yet, for all
that, an earnest & faithful supporter
of Mr. Lincoln & his government;
and is for the war, as things are
now going on."

"He says, he has kept Garrison
fully informed of what he has
done, & has intimated that he
does not wish to embarrass the
Party in any way. They are to
repudiate his action, so far as
they may conceive he has acted

unwisely. His authority was to
speak publicly, but not to corre-
spond with Mason. That was never
thought of, until friends in England
suggested that mode."

"I showed your letter to Mr.
Conway, & he said it was a very
proper & natural one under the
circumstances."

(This letter of mine was
one very similar to the one
you have addressed to me.
The friends in Manchester quite
agreed in the view I took of
Mr. C's diplomacy, & adopted a
resolution, exonerating themselves
from complicity, & or supported
co-incidence of opinion in

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regard to disunion negotiations.

Lt. W. Beecher, who was in Manchester at the time, expressed his great surprise on reading the correspondence, & his conviction that W. C. had no sufficient authority for what he had done; but said he should give no opinion, publicly, until he knew more about the matter.

Mr. Saml. Lucas, in a conversation that I had with him on Saturday, told me that he had reason to believe that W. Conway was outwitted by Mason in the answer he received to the letter he / Conway,

addressed to him. That, instead
of being a scornful refusal of
the proposition made, it was
an unexpected call upon him
to produce his credentials, &
hence the delay of the rejoinder.
Mr. Lucas did not think the cor-
respondence would much affect the
question here, but admitted, it
was calculated to make much
mischievous in America, & to put
the Abolitionists in a false &
trying position. You may rest
assured that Mr. Adams will be
put in possession of all the
facts touching this ill-advised
and disagreeable affair, expect-
ing when there is but one opinion.

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Not having had the opportunity of
conversing with Mr Conway, and
learning, as I do through a friend,
that he has prepared a letter upon
the correspondence which has been
published, I have not at present
done more than hold private com-
munication with particular indi-
viduals, and disclaim, on my
own account, all knowledge of
Mr Conway's proceedings. I am
ready, however, to do all that my
duty to our friends on the other
side may seem to require, but
I desire to do it judiciously, &
above all to know, if I can,
to what extent Mr C. was autho-
rized, in any way, to commit
them to a withdrawal of their

support from their own party on
condition of the South adopting,
ostensibly, an Anti-Slavery policy.
I have for some time been of
opinion that Union is now the
only sure road to Emancipation,
& that the cause would in effect
be betrayed by any negotiations
that would leave the slaves at the
mercy of the whites.

I could write much on the
subject, but my time is gone. Com-
municate with me freely, & give
me all the counsel you can.
I much need it, for I am greatly
perplexed how to act for the best.
Whatever else I may learn shall
be communicated.

Very truly Yours
Geo Thompson